



Head of the Lakes
UNITED WAY

WHAT WE DO

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROCESS

We invest in local nonprofit programs focused on health, education, and financial stability. Our unique process involves the community at every step, from donating to serving on investment panels that evaluate programs and guide funding decisions.

- More than 30 local nonprofit organizations benefit from the Head of the Lakes United Way (HLUW) investment process.
- Support goes beyond the check. These organizations and other nonprofits in HLUW's service area also have access to our Volunteer Center and other programming such as our Be on Board trainings.
- Data-informed decision making ensures funds are directed where they're needed most. HLUW uses tools like the ALICE Report and community input to prioritize investments that address root causes and create measurable impact.

VOLUNTEER CENTER

This program serves as a “one-stop” shop for individuals and groups looking for volunteer opportunities in our local communities. We promote volunteerism and mobilize volunteer efforts to create positive change. Acting as a bridge between people who want to make a difference and organizations in need of support, the Volunteer Center plays a key role in strengthening the region.

- **Day of Caring** is a semi-annual event that connects more than 200 volunteers with local non-profit agencies. On average over 550 hours are contributed on each Day of Caring, providing an estimated cost savings of more than \$20,000 to local nonprofits.
- **Twin Ports College Connect** is a partnership with area colleges to foster natural connections between students and community service opportunities. It supports student engagement in service learning while encouraging nonprofit collaboration in research and innovation.
- **Volunteer recognition** is essential to retention. Each year, Head of the Lakes United Way partners with local nonprofits to find creative and meaningful ways to show appreciation to their volunteers, free of charge to the nonprofits.
- The Volunteer Center also facilitates networking among local volunteer coordinators, helping them connect, collaborate, and share best practices to enhance volunteer engagement across the region.

COMMUNITY SERVICES PARTNERSHIP

Through our partnership with the AFL-CIO, we are able to support working families and strengthen our communities. Union members volunteer in all aspects of United Way's work, from serving on committees and participating in campaigns, to helping communicate the importance of giving back to fellow union members.

- The **Emergency Member Assistance Program** provides financial support to union members and their families experiencing hardship.
- The **Holiday Assistance Program** offers both financial aid and gift donations to families during the holiday season. On average, 80 families receive financial support during Thanksgiving and the winter holidays, and over 50 children receive holiday gifts through the Giving Tree initiative.
- This partnership also plays a crucial role in facilitating many local events and initiatives. Join us at any of these future events including: Duluth Construction Career Night, Workers Memorial Day, Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive or the Labor Day Picnic.

ADDRESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Creating lasting change means stepping up to meet emerging needs. Head of the Lakes United Way leads a variety of initiatives across Northeast Minnesota and Northwest Wisconsin.

- **Be on Board** equips community members with essential skills to serve on boards of directors for local nonprofit organizations.
- **Babysitting Classes** are offered at no cost across the region, giving youth valuable training while supporting families with access to safe, skilled babysitters.
- **Stuff the Bus** is an annual school supply drive that provides critical resources to local students. Community partners serve as drop-off locations, and HLUW staff ensure supplies reach those who need them most. In 2024 we raised over \$10,000 worth of school supplies.
- **Disaster Relief** efforts are activated when tragedy strikes. In 2025, HLUW raised more than \$47,000 to support recovery efforts after wildfires devastated parts of Lake County, MN.
- **ALICE** research shines a light on households that are employed but struggling to afford essentials like housing, childcare, and food. By sharing this data with partners and the public, HLUW helps drive awareness, policy change, and targeted community solutions.
- United Way's **211 Information and Referral** is a free, confidential service that connects individuals to local resources 24/7. Whether someone needs help with housing, food, mental health, or utilities, 211 ensures they can find the right support quickly and easily. This resource operates nationally but provides local assistance from trained Community Resources Specialists who can quickly assess callers' needs and connect them with the appropriate resources.